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SHEEP UPON  
THE UPLAND  
COTTON  
FIELDS, *And*  
*Some Other Matters.*

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AN ADDRESS Prepared  
for Submission to the  
Southern Cotton Spin-  
ners' Association at  
Their Meeting to be  
Held in Charlotte, N.  
C., May 14th and 15th,  
1903. ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶

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*With the compliments  
of Edward Atkinson.*



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## SHEEP UPON THE UPLAND COTTON FIELDS, AND SOME OTHER MATTERS.

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*Gentlemen of the Southern Cotton Spinners' Association:*

When I first received the invitation to attend your meeting and to speak to you on the matter of insurance, I thought I would not risk the long railway trip, but would send my paper to be read to you. Later it occurred to me that here might be an opportunity to address you on the fundamental conditions underlying the whole cotton industry of the world, by the right development of which not only your cotton manufactures, but our own may be promoted, or by the neglect of which all may be retarded.

The first opportunity ever given to a Northern anti-slaveryman to speak words of truth and soberness to Southern men was, I believe, extended to me by the invitation to address a few of the leading men of your section in the Senate Chamber of Georgia, in 1880, on how to establish a cotton exposition in all its parts. I decided to make that address plain and simple, and under the guise of a cotton exposition to bring about an exhibit of the great potential of the Southland in mineral, timber and agriculture. In order to make this work effective I decided to draw the contrast between the past system of labor, the present and the future, from the standpoint of the economist who had always been an active opponent of slavery. You will observe that all the concepts of the political economist are and must be based upon personal liberty and upon the equal right of every man, without distinction of race or color, to achieve the highest position in art or industry that may fall within his capacity. That fundamental principle or rule of action needs to be

re-stated to-day with all the force with which I endeavored to state it in the Senate Chamber of Georgia in 1880.

My Southern friends imputed to me and to that speech more credit than I should ever dare take to myself, for the influence which it had in opening new lines of progress throughout the Southland. As I am now long past the three score years and ten of active life, I may yet more surely address you, perhaps pointing out some of your shortcomings without giving offense. But if offense be taken toward one who simply stands fast upon the principle of liberty established by the great statesmen of the South as well as the North, in the early history of this country, then let him take warning of the fateful significance of his position. He will be wrecked if he dashes himself against the rock of liberty. It may even happen, on the other hand, as I once said in a great public meeting in Atlanta, that the children of Confederate soldiers may sometime erect a bronze statue to John Brown on the heights of Harper's Ferry in token of the liberty which he brought to the white men of the South. Within three months after that speech a most remarkable article, written by an ex-Confederate officer, appeared in the "Century" magazine on that very subject, the emancipation of the white men of your section.

Can I go any farther in challenging your attention? There can be no limited or partial application of the principle of liberty in a nation which is founded on that principle. Lincoln said, "No nation can exist half free and half slave." It is equally true that while a section may continue to exist in a feeble and fitful way, half enfranchised and half disfranchised, it can never thrive or prosper to the full measure of its resources, but will languish for years as the Island of Jamaica did. When the slaves of the British Islands were emancipated the owners were compensated and were endowed with the entire power of legislation. Their main interest was in their sugar plantations and their sugar factories, in which the work of the laborer was arduous in the extreme and but ill paid. The emancipated negroes left these works, established themselves all over the island on little

plots of land, where they followed the smaller arts of cultivation, picking pimento, raising their own supplies. They were well housed according to their standard; they began to prosper, but the exports of the island diminished and the great sugar factories were short of operatives. What happened? The white planters controlling legislation turned the whole power of taxation against the colored workmen, taxing their roofs, taxing their windows, putting differential taxes on their imported supplies, and in this way tried to force them back into the sugar factories. What ensued? The ruin of the island for half a century. Yet of late, in spite of the continued existence of differential taxes, that island has begun to prosper since the Yankees developed its resources, gaining slowly and surely in the common welfare of the masses of the people, while the sugar plantations have all gone to ruin. Only within the present year have those differential taxes been adjusted to the new conditions.

What is Chamberlain proposing in South Africa except the same thing, namely, to put hut taxes and other taxes upon the colored inhabitants, in order to make it necessary for them to earn money with which to pay their taxes, and thus indirectly force them into the mines. That plan will fail as every plan must fail economically which is not consistent with justice, equal rights and liberty under equal laws. Whatever the conditions of the franchise may be, no State or section will attain the full measure of its prosperity where any effort is made to draw that distinction on the color line.

Now rebuke me if you please for bringing politics into a business meeting, but before you do so let me ask you, what is business? It is the conduct of commerce, manufactures, agriculture and the exchange of products, product for product, service for service. It rests on mutual benefit and mutual interest. And what are politics? The conduct of the business of government; the making of laws; the establishment of liberty and equal rights, to the end that the mutual benefits and opportunities may be shared by all, rich and poor, black and white, so that each according to his

ability and opportunity may attain whatever standard of welfare his intelligence and character entitle him to.

Gentlemen of the South, it was in similar terms that I addressed the leading men of Georgia and South Carolina in the Senate Chamber of Georgia, in 1880. It is on these plain terms that I have spoken and written many times in many places in your Southland. This is probably the last time I shall have the opportunity to speak within your boundaries. I am now addressing men of capacity and intelligence, the leaders of the new industries of the New South, to whom I may appeal, admitting that in some respects the men who are within and who are engaged in the great problem which must be solved, may have knowledge that I do not possess; but also asking you to bear in mind that one who is accustomed to the impartial and unprejudiced scientific investigation of economic problems often gets a broader view and a more accurate conception of general truths than those who are in the heat of what may be called a great industrial as well as social contest. You may be assured that one principle is supreme:

"You may take the sun out of the sky  
Ere Freedom out of man."

We know the stupendous difficulties which are imposed upon you. We know that our ancestors are responsible as well as yours. We attempt neither to dictate nor to control. We rest assured that justice will be done by the true leaders of your great Southland. You have our sympathy, and we can only make suggestion. There will be errors on your part, and there will be errors on our part. Not in less than a century of liberty will the wrongs of more than two centuries of slavery be redressed. We know from our own experience and from the difficulties which the enormous immigration of ignorant foreigners impose upon us, that this problem is one of the most profoundly difficult, but you may rest assured that no such question can ever be settled by compromise with wrong, and nothing will ever be established except that which is right.



One suggestion I may make at this point. Large sums of money are being contributed in aid of Southern education. Fears are expressed that the contributors may not adjust the conditions to those which you are assumed to comprehend more fully than those who give the money. I think there need be no such fears, and some of the objections almost seem to indicate a fear lest the poor black, eager for schooling, should for a time attain a better material position than the poor white, who has not yet had even as good an opportunity as the black.

Now let us glance over the conditions which have enabled the great Western and Southwestern States like Oklahoma, to build school-houses even in advance of suitable dwellings for those whose children are to attend the schools. Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and I believe Georgia and other States surrendered to the nation a great part of the western and northwestern territory. When the nation began to dispose of these public lands large areas were wisely reserved to enable the settlers to establish schools. From these resources more than sixty million dollars have been derived and expended in the construction of school-houses, while the Southern States that gave over to the nation the title to this vast territory have received nothing or next to nothing. You have a claim of right, not of charity, that the avails of public lands, still coming in in very considerable amounts, shall be assigned by the nation to you, in order to enable you to establish popular education in the cotton kingdom as fully as it has been established in the West. Texas retained her public lands and has the greatest potential endowment for school purposes of any State in the Nation. Why do you not combine in demanding of the nation your share in the avails of these public lands, in some measure equal to the share which has been devoted to common schools in the great West? New England will aid you and I doubt not the Middle States would support you in this demand, which would be of right.

Now with this introduction, which it seemed fit that some one should put before the thinking men of your States, I will submit to you a plain statement of the reasons why you

ought to fold sheep on your partially exhausted cotton fields in this upland or Piedmont district.

The last counsel that our great War Governor, John A. Andrew, gave to his friends a little before his death in 1866, was to enter upon "the vigorous pursuit of peace in our relations with the Southern States." I have always kept that counsel in view in my Southern addresses.

It happened that when I first spoke in the Senate Chamber of Georgia I almost unwittingly gave utterance to a statement from which the cotton seed oil industry was presently generated. I said that if we had possessed a variety of the cotton plant producing no fibre but only seed, it would long since have been one of the most valuable crops in the United States. It seemed to me the statement of a most obvious fact, but it proved that to my hearers it was a most startling almost incredible suggestion. What have we witnessed since 1881 in the utilization of cotton seed? I need not measure it in money or attempt to measure its importance.

Sheep on the cotton field will yield yet greater results. The last time I had occasion to speak to a picked body of men was at the last Atlanta Exposition, where I went with the late editor of the Philadelphia "Times." Our friends of Georgia and South Carolina gave us a reception, and after we had been treated with the usual Southern hospitality and had passed our compliments to each other in mutual admiration according to the customary method on such occasions, one of my Southern friends called out, "This isn't your way, Atkinson; hit us, you always do." To which I replied, "But I am your guest; this is not the right occasion." "Oh," he rejoined, "we give you leave. You always hit straight from the shoulder, and we get some good sense." "All right," said I, "if you give me leave I will hit." I then proceeded.

"I have come down again through your Piedmont district, witnessing the vast improvements that you have made in less than a single generation since the devastation of war, but casting my thought toward the future I still witness one great deficiency. I advise you to return to your respective

capitals and by act of legislation take off the palmetto from the State seal of South Carolina and the emblems of justice from the State seal of Georgia, substituting a yellow dog rampant, with the motto, "Cave Canem." The dog rules you, and so long as that is the case you can attain nothing like the position in agriculture to which your soil, climate and conditions entitle you. I am informed that every poor man keeps two dogs and every d—n poor man has four. Until you muzzle those dogs you cannot put sheep upon your cotton fields or upon your mountains or your valleys with any sense of security."

Well, they threw up their hands and admitted that I had hit them in a very tender spot. I do not know what progress you have made since then. I do know that you have improved your cattle and that you are developing a big cattle industry in the mountains of Virginia and North Carolina. I do know that improved breeds of sheep are pervading Western Virginia, some parts of Virginia proper and I believe some parts of North Carolina. You know more about that than I do. But I wish to bring you down to the Piedmont upland district, where you may attain as paramount a control over the production of the fine clothing wools of the world as you have attained in the production of cotton in the cotton States. You may leave the long wool sheep and the sheep that can only be gathered in small flocks for the mountain valleys and for the hillsides, turning your attention to the merino and the cross breeds that can be folded together in large numbers and can be used in the most effective manner for renovating the partially exhausted surface soil of this great Piedmont district.

Can I be mistaken? What are the requisite conditions for the production of fine clothing wools or merino breeds of sheep? Are they not a light soil, well drained, where the sheep will be free from foot rot; a climate not too hot in summer or through long periods to make the wool hairy, not too cold to require the housing of the sheep in winter; sufficiently fertile soil to yield ample food products to carry the sheep through periods when the grass has been consumed or

dried away; freedom from excessive storms, and comfortable conditions for those who care for the flocks? There will be of course the difficulties which are met with in all sheep growing. There are special diseases, but there are specific remedies for nearly every type of such disease, while others are sure to be found. If such are the conditions, are they not the exact and special conditions of the Piedmont Plateau and of the uplands of Georgia? I only know this subject by theory and by study. You ought to know it a great deal better than I do. What reply have you to make to my questions? Why do you not make wool upon your cotton fields and renovate your lands by putting sheep upon them?

I may venture to quote to you, as I did to your friends in Georgia in 1880, the dictum of a Southern man on the old process of raising cotton and other crops. Governor Wise rendered the verdict on agriculture as it was, when he said that "the niggers skinned the land and the white men skinned the niggers." You have not fully surmounted the evil of that skinning of the land. That is proved by the relatively very small ratio of stock in the Atlantic Cotton States as compared to the aggregate product of your fields and as compared to the quantities of stock that are carried in other agricultural districts. If you study carefully the details of the census you will find that the progress and prosperity of agriculture correspond to the proportion of cattle, hogs and sheep that are maintained on the farms from which the other great commercial crops are drawn, the fertilizers made on the farm being restored to the soil, or in some cases, as in Massachusetts and a few other Eastern States, the fertilizers drawn from the great cities as well as that supplied by stock upon the farms being applied to the maintenance of the soil or even to the making of the soil.

It is an error to assume that agriculture is a lost art in New England. The products of the field, of the pasture and of the market garden were never so large in proportion to the population of Massachusetts as they are now. Our crops per acre of Indian corn far exceed the average of your Southern field corn, and there are in the neighborhood of

our cities acres and acres of glass by the hundred under which early crops are made. These are the most profitable acres of land, on which a thousand dollars a year may be spent in fertilizers and in cultivation.

I have therefore again called attention to your great opportunity to renovate the uplands of this whole section from here to Northern Alabama and Mississippi inclusive, by folding sheep upon your partially exhausted cotton fields. You are being obliged to go to the bottom lands in Mississippi and to Texas for the long-staple cotton to use in your fine work, when if you would give as much and as intelligent study and put as much work into your fields as you are putting into your factories, you would raise all the long-stapled and strong-stapled cotton that you need, right from here throughout the Piedmont section. What will you do about it?

Before replying to this question I desire to call your attention to certain curiously similar conditions in Great Britain about a hundred and fifty and in the Southern States about fifty years ago, and to the utterly different conditions prevailing in New England and the West in the conduct of agriculture. When in the latter part of the last century Arthur Young introduced the cultivation of the turnip into Great Britain, in order to sustain sheep folded upon the fields, the aristocracy of Great Britain, being the great land owners, were a class of thoroughly intelligent, progressive men who owned the land and supplied the capital to the tenant farmers, also a very intelligent class. But Hodge, the peasant, was anything but intelligent; he was and is a clodhopper, without prospect of elevation above his present condition; instructed by parson and the owner to learn that where his lot had been cast therewith to be content—the most obnoxious sentiment that ever retarded the progress of a State or people. Under these conditions the ideas which Arthur Young brought over from Holland were at once adopted by the introduction of the sheep, not for the direct purpose of raising wool and mutton, but for the main purpose of renovating the land and bringing it to its highest

condition of production in grain and food crops. From that date the agriculture of Great Britain has rested upon the sheep, intelligently developed as compared to the older periods when, although wool was a main product of Great Britain, it was rough, hairy and poor by comparison. Yet you observe that the highest officer of the judiciary of Great Britain, the Lord Chancellor, sits upon the wool sack as the emblem of the nation.

Now what were the corresponding conditions in the South in agriculture under the old conditions? An aristocracy of high character and intelligence, conducting their plantations with the greatest possible intelligence and applying the best methods that circumstances and ignorant labor would permit, without the intervention of tenant farmers between them and the laborers, but with the assistance of overseers. The laborers upon the cotton field, of necessity, possessed a less measure of intelligence or hope of industrial progress than the peasants of England. The growers of cotton possessed an unwholesome monopoly of the production of cotton; they thought it was king when it was not and never had been. The best thing that could happen to the cotton growers of the South today would be for good government to be established in the Argentine Republic. They might then be subjected to a really serious competition in the effort to supply the world with cotton of the green seed or common varieties. Egypt can never do it. Her capacity has reached its maximum. Egyptian cotton supplements our American; it does not compete. India can never compete. Africa can never do it. Central Asia can in a small way, for the supply of Russia. Having too great monopoly of the crop and too wide an area of land, your progress in the cotton field and in the handling of the cotton itself is not what it should be and not what it would be if you were subjected to a reasonable and intelligent competition.

That former method of great plantations went out. The new methods, the new men and the New South have been developed. You will develop the growing and handling of cotton, the renovation of your fields and the support of

all your own mills in this district in just proportion to your development of common intelligence among the masses of the community. You will succeed in renovating land and in the introduction and protection of sheep only by muzzling the cur dog, and that requires intelligence among the masses.

Western agriculture is being subjected to a complete revolution under the influence of the Agricultural Experiment stations. The old methods of growing sod crops, dealing with the land as a mine subject presently to exhaustion, have gone by. The sons of the pioneers, bred in an intelligent manner and possessing more ample capital, have turned to intensive farming. They are dealing with the soil as a laboratory that will yield product in just proportion to the mental energy and intelligence which is applied to its use. With this application of common sense, general and widely diffused intelligence and the new methods of science, the products of the great prairies of the West and Northwest have been enormously augmented, the cost has been diminished and the number of workmen to the ratio of the product has also been greatly diminished by the substitution of mechanism for manual work.

All this has rested for its possibility upon the common school and upon the preparation of every boy and girl to take an intelligent part in the development not only of agriculture, but of every industry that pervades the great Western and Southwestern States. But with this progress, land has become too valuable for wool growing, and the product of hens' eggs in Ohio is worth twice as much as the wool clip.

I, therefore, press this problem before you—sheep upon the cotton fields, mainly for renovating the land and doubling the cotton crop in one or two years, adding the wool clip and the mutton as an incident. I have submitted several times a project to set apart a field of four hundred acres to be surrounded by a seven-row, dog-proof, barbed-wire fence; to be cut into four sections by cross divisions. In the middle a place reserved for the farm buildings, the cotton gin and press and other appliances, opening into each field. When I first planned this the fencing would have cost twelve hun-

dred dollars (\$12,000). I then proposed to plant the land, one field in cotton, one in corn, one in cow peas, and to put sheep on the fourth field, feeding from within or without, as might happen. The next year move each crop, bring the sheep over to the cotton field and put cattle and hogs into some part of the area. In this way I held that the land would be renovated; meat would be provided; sheep, wool and cattle for sale while the cotton crop would be doubled. Booker Washington has taken this up; don't let him get ahead of you.

I have examined all the records in DeBow's Review and all the evidence that can be attained, and I can find no reason why this system should not be adopted upon the uplands of your Piedmont district, except the incapacity of the farmers and the ignorance of the field hands, both white and black. If I have put that too harshly, correct me. There are, of course, a large number of men who are fully competent to establish this system—men here before me who can do it if they will. What prevents you? Is there anything unreasonable, visionary or dangerous in such a simple proposition, which you can easily correct or vary, knowing the special conditions better than I do? Do I know the general conditions better than you do or not? Does the man who stands outside sometimes get a broader view and a more accurate measure of what can and ought to be done than those who are in the middle of the struggle? I believe that is often the case, and having touched upon that and having long since begun to study the potential of this great Southland, beginning even in 1861 with the issue of an absolutely prophetic pamphlet on "Cheap Cotton by Free Labor," in which pamphlet I also laid down the whole future of the cotton seed oil industry in all its details, when there was but one mill pressing cotton seed in the whole United States, and that was done secretly for the conversion of the oil into olive oil—what I remark now is that you have entered upon the cotton industry more skilfully and more successfully in the making of cotton fabrics than you have in dealing with and preparing the cotton for the factory. The cotton crop



as a whole has deteriorated. It is not as well handled or as well ginned as the cotton produced on the large plantations was handled and sent to market under the former conditions. The public ginneries are run at high speed for the largest possible out turn, and are injuring the cotton year by year more than it was injured in former days. You have made slight progress in improvement in baling. With the exception of American wool, American cotton is more wastefully dealt with in the primary processes and in getting it to market than any other important staple of the world. American wool is worse yet. Under the obstructive influence of the present tariff the consumption of wool by the people of the United States has been reduced from nine pounds to six pounds per head. The effort to keep out foreign wool has totally failed, as anyone who knew anything of the subject predicted that it would fail, but its cost has been doubled by taxation. The American wool cannot be successfully used in a large part of the fabrics now made without the admixture of foreign wools, especially the Australian and Argentine, in order to compete with foreign manufacturers who have wool free of tax.

Under these conditions the production of wool, which is but a fraction of one per cent. in value on the total value of our farm products, has diminished in the farming States. It has increased only in the far Northwest, where great flocks of what have become known as the "hoofed locusts" are roaming over and destroying the cattle ranges, grazing over the mountains and the hillsides, destroying the grass, destroying the trees and even destroying the soil on which trees might again grow; thus altering the conditions of the flow of water in the great rivers on which the Middle West depends. These flocks of "hoofed locusts" are doing infinite damage, while sending to market dirty, turdy, badly-handled, badly-picked wool, of which no buyer can trust a sample, but is obliged to throw every fleece before he sends it to his factory. This is the evil influence of efforts to protect a home industry of this kind. You are not protected by a duty, but by too great a monopoly of the cotton supply. Here is the

open field for you to compete freely with the world, without any tax upon the foreign wool if you can get it removed. You can raise wool in the Piedmont district, beating the territorial wools in quality and quantity, and beating Australia, where within the last five years one-third of the whole body of the great flocks of sheep have been destroyed by drought. You now pay double price for your sham woollen fabrics and get shoddy at that. That is what is called protection to the wool grower.

One great difficulty in your Southland is that the conditions of your labor are too arduous, the hours are too long and the wages or earnings in the field, the workshop and the factory are too low for the most effective work and the lowest cost of labor by the unit of product. I have spoken of this many times before, and when I once uttered these words at a meeting where Governor Gordon, of Georgia, was present, he sent for me to come to his house in the evening. He told me that when I said the words, "short hours, high wages and low cost of production," he thought I was crazy, but on reflection he had come to the conclusion that I was right. No one can fail to come to that conclusion. If you work operatives in the factory on modern, high speed machinery over-long hours, you make second quality cloth, and you will rapidly destroy their nervous energy. You wear out your machinery without knowing it, and your temporary increase in the margin of profit will be of short duration. When I was in charge of cotton factories, one large mill in Maine was worked under my supervision 11 hours a day; another in Massachusetts, on very similar goods, ten hours a day. We made more money in the Massachusetts mill than we did in the mill in Maine. I am and have long been satisfied that ten hours a day five days in the week, and six hours for Saturday is more profitable than any other system, and as time goes on you will all come to that conclusion.

Now on high rates of wages and low cost by the unit of product: Reflect upon it for a moment. In all these arts, whether in the field, the forest or the factory, to which modern invention and mechanism have been applied, it requires

intelligence, aptitude and gumption to get the best results out of them. When you get the best results and the largest product, you can afford to pay the highest rates of wages that the force of the product will permit in order to lessen the cost of your production by employing only skilled workmen. I have traced this rule in more than fifty arts over more than fifty years. It is invariable, and while I do not wish to boast of old Massachusetts, I may venture to say that on the whole the rates of wages are higher in our fields, in our workshops and in our factories than they are elsewhere. When you think that you have got a lower cost of production because you have lower rates of wages, you may be well assured that it won't last, and that in proportion as your operatives become intelligent they will inevitably drift away to that point or place or section, whether in cotton spinning, wood-working or anything else, where the conditions are best; where the schools are most adequate; where the standard of life is the highest; and where the wages are the highest. At that point the work will be done at the lowest cost of production by the unit of the yard, the pair of boots, the pound, or the bushel.

But again, where is your principal home market? Ninety per cent. of the persons who are occupied for gain in this country, each of whom supports nearly two others, are wage earners or are on small salaries or are working on farms with their farm hands. Among these multitudes is the great demand for your fabrics and products of every kind. The demand of the millionaire is but a trifle as compared to the demand of the millions. Now when wages are high, the hours of labor moderate and the intelligence of the people and the standard of living well developed, the demands for the comforts as well as for the necessities of life will be the greatest, and there you will find the biggest market. Now until down here in the Southland you have put all your energies into elevating the standard of life, developing the ability and the working capacity and enhancing the wages of the poor whites and the poor blacks alike by developing greater ability, leaving the social question to take care of itself, you

will have a very limited domestic market for the meanest kind of goods that can be made. When you reach the standard of our old Commonwealth of Massachusetts in your appropriations for schools and in the development of the best conditions for your working people, you may be able to refer to your records and show as we do, that about every other person, one in two (about 1,600,000), of the population of the State has an average deposit in a savings bank of the safest kind of \$350; the total amount according to the report just rendered to the Legislature being but little short of \$600,000,000 last year, now exceeding that sum—three quarters of which or more belongs to the boot and shoe makers, the clothiers, the factory operatives, the domestic servants, and yet more to the great multitude of intelligent mechanics occupied in the lesser industries, whose products are greater in the aggregate than that of any single group of factories and in whose work mental and manual energy are developed in the man and the woman by the very process of the work itself.

Think of this for a moment. In every branch of industry—on the farm, in the forest, in the mine, in the workshop or the factory, wherever modern science and invention have changed the methods of production, intelligence must be developed in corresponding measure. That intelligence will give the clear perception that the workman is worthy of his hire in proportion to his or her own skill and aptitude. That will set men and women thinking about their relative opportunity, leading them to try to find the best place and the best conditions for their children—and this development may be found among the lowly as well as among the higher departments of industry.

Not long ago I met on the New York boat a colored man, on his way from Virginia to Connecticut. It was in the early autumn. I fell into talk with him; asked him where he was going. He said he was going to one of the large workshops in Connecticut, where he had a permanent job every winter for about seven months out of the year. His wife and children lived in one of the sleepy

towns on the James river, where he owned a little place, and where he spent his summer. I asked him why he did not stay in Virginia all the year round and develop some kind of good work there, to which he replied: "No chance dar, boss; dey ain't got no energy roun' dar. We raises our corn and meat and den I goes up to Connecticut where I can make some money." Said I, "How long are you going to keep this up?" "Not much longer, boss. I'se bought a small farm in Connecticut; I'se paying for it. When I get out of debt, den I moves my fam'ly up into Connecticut—*good schools dar for de chillun*; ain't none such in Virginia."

Now suppose you reason a bit on that story, which is typical of the movement of intelligent labor to the most favorable points. You need the work of every worker, without regard to race or color, in these Atlantic States. You need not only to keep what you have, but to bring workmen from outside. In the competition for laborers, Missouri, Oklahoma, the Indian Territory and Texas compete with you, all equally demanding the immigration of men competent to work on the fields, in the mines, the forests and the workshops, without regard to color. In these States there has been no interference with the equal rights of men. The head of the Village Improvement Society, who is modifying the conditions of a whole county in Texas, respected and supported alike by all his neighbors, is a colored man. Wherever individual capacity and character are recognized, there is the proof of mental and material progress; where they are not recognized there is the proof of lack, both of mental and material progress. Those sections in which these factors are permitted to do their full work will steadily and slowly and surely drain away from the unprogressive sections of the country all the most intelligent workmen, leaving only the drudges, who can do nothing better for themselves or for their State than to continue their ignorant and slovenly methods, especially in the conduct of agriculture. You hold out the most brilliant pictures of your great resources and of the opportunities that are offered

for their development along this whole section of the Atlantic Cotton States. But you are not alone in the possession of these great resources. Texas is a great undeveloped empire of almost untold resources. The cotton produced by free labor before the Civil War was rapidly increasing, and in a short time the economy of free labor would have destroyed the costly slave-grown cotton of other sections, in the natural course of events. In that State there is no distinction of race or color, except that which establishes itself in the social order. If let alone, men vote under such suitable conditions as may be rightly established—South or North—as the condition of the suffrage without regard to race. In that State there is the most urgent demand for labor. It will drain neighboring States if they do not give equal rights and equal opportunities.

The Indian Territory is about to be opened. Oklahoma, opened only fifteen years ago, contains more than half a million inhabitants, makes cotton as well as corn and every other product. In this great area, the two together fifty thousand square miles, a million laborers may be wanted. How did these settlers begin? Almost before they had sheltered themselves in their own dwelling houses they had begun to build very substantial school-houses, and there they stand—the primary, the grammar, the high school, the normal school and the university; solid, substantial buildings, dominating the section in which they are. Before these settlers had barely housed themselves in comfort or turned the sod, they had laid the foundation for common education from the primary school to the university. In this section the right of suffrage is conditional upon intelligence, but not upon color, and to that section colored men of standing and capacity will surely go.

Which will be the first State along the Atlantic coast to find out that inequality in human rights doesn't pay? I venture to guess that it will be the State that has sometimes been called the Yankee State of the South—Georgia—where presently the great economic force of equal rights and of

suffrage based on intelligence may get the first start toward the full development of its industrial forces.

Gentlemen, it is neither land, nor mines, nor forests, nor factories that make the State; it is men who make the State, and in the exact proportion of their comprehension of the principle of liberty and of equal rights will be their mental energy, their moral standing and their political sagacity.

The State to which the most intelligent workmen and laborers will repair will be the State in which equality before the law is established and sustained by public opinion; in which equal opportunities for material progress are offered without distinction of color, because in that State the workmen will find the opportunity to earn the highest rates of wages that the market price of his product will warrant and yet make that product at the lowest cost of labor. That will also be the State in which capital will be abundant, banking most firmly established, the rate of interest the lowest, but the aggregate profits the largest, because in that State will be the greatest expansion of trade and commerce within its own boundaries and with other States.

You have made more progress than you know toward the attainment of a high place in raising stock. When I first began to study the conditions of the cotton kingdom I found most intelligent statements in the essay of Dr. N. B. Cloud, of Alabama. What was his verdict at that time? He said: "You have gullied your hillsides and blasted your prairies, and being in possession of the best forage plants of the world, you have rendered yourselves dependent upon the North for hay to feed your cattle." All that is changed over an increasing section of your agricultural district. The lespedeza holds the soil on your hillsides; the cow pea in great variety is renovating the soil; the soya bean, of which I imported a few bushels from China for the Atlanta Exposition of 1881, whence they were distributed in small parcels, has become one of your great forage crops. All intelligent planters and farmers have put away the all-cotton theory, and with diversified agriculture have made great progress, but as yet nothing compared with what may be

accomplished in the future. Fence laws and dog laws are beginning to be enforced in many sections. Your cattle are being bred with a view to the conditions of the Southern climate. One of Booker Washington's experts, who was at the Columbian Exposition of 1893, learning the secret of innoculating milk with the bacterium of June butter, is making excellent butter from Southern milk, supplying the markets of Mobile, Montgomery and other places in a way never attained before. But as yet, you have done nothing with sheep in the Atlantic Cotton States, where the supreme opportunity exists for supplying the fine wools of the world. Only contrast the wool industry of this country with that of Great Britain, where every county has its special breed, adapted to the exact conditions of that little county. I went once with the sheep breeder of another county to see some Oxford Down sheep that had taken the highest premium in all Great Britain. He was prepared to buy for breeding in his own county. The grower said I will sell you the sheep, but you cannot make Oxford Down wool in your county; your breed is better adapted to your conditions. Down in Leicestershire, where the fields are divided by stone walls, Bakewell bred a short-legged sheep so that they could not leap over the walls. Think of the Southdown mutton, equalled in Kentucky if not excelled. Bear in mind the Shetland wools, the coarse fleeces of the Scotch moors, woven into the most durable Scotch tweeds, the most serviceable cloth that a man can wear out in the rain and over the hills, on which you must pay a tax of one hundred per cent. if you try to supply yourselves with such a foreign luxury. You can equal and excell the wool product of Great Britain in quantity and variety whenever you apply as much intelligence to the art and work it out not only with the fine clothing wools on your upland section, but the long wools and the medium wools on your hillsides and in your mountain valleys.

Georgia is larger than England and Wales, fifty-nine thousand (59,000) square miles; North Carolina is larger than England, forty-eight thousand six hundred (48,600)



square miles—each with less waste land. England has over twenty important breeds of sheep—Leicester, Cotswold, Lincoln, Oxford Down, Shropshire, Hampshire Down, Suffolk, Dorset Horn, Kent or Romney March, Devon Long-wool, Ryeland, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Wensleydale, Roscommon, Limestone, Black-faced Mountain, Lonk and Welsh Mountain. How many have you? How many might you have? In two hundred miles of distance east and west, from the level of the coast lands in North Carolina, to the top of Roane Mountain, which our great botanist, Dr. Asa Gray, declared to be the most beautiful mountain in the world, are found the flora and the fauna of two thousand miles of distance from the Gulf to the St. Lawrence. What are you doing with this domain? What are the names of the special breeds of sheep on the sandy lands of the piney woods? What is the best cross-breed of the merino on your partially exhausted cotton and tobacco land? What is the county name of your best long-wool sheep? I thought I heard some one say Buncombe. What will be the names after you have digested this address?

But one thing let me beg of you—improve your breeds of cattle and sheep, but for heaven's sake don't try to improve the razor-backed hog. I won't have any other ham in my house, and when properly cooked it beats every kind of pig meat that there is in the world.

Gentlemen, under the guise of dealing with a merely material problem, I have ranged over a wide field. You may observe that every part of this treatise is bound in with the other, weaving the web that binds society together. If that web is not firmly woven, the three fates of the old myth may cut the strands and the end of the life of the nation, the State or the section will come.

Again, let me enforce upon your minds the fundamental principle of political life, of social order and of material prosperity. No nation, no State, no dominant race can permanently govern another, either by the force of arms or by the force of legislation, without the gravest injury to both. The race which submits to such government is emas-

culated and deprived of its power of progress, even if for the time it may gain in mere material conditions. Witness the conditions of India at the present time. But the greater harm falls upon the dominant rulers, nation, State or race. The effect of this false system is almost invariably to generate corruption, or else rulers become so arrogant as to utterly fail to comprehend the spirit or soul of the oppressed people whom they rule—they rely wholly on force to maintain their control without regard to human rights, either individual or collective.

You are at the parting of the ways in these Atlantic and Gulf Cotton States. The responsibility is upon you, and you cannot evade it. According to your decision will be the welfare or the ill-fare of your Southland, and if you err the errors of the fathers will be visited upon the children even unto the third and fourth generations.

Gentlemen, the one great lesson that I have learned in over sixty years of working life, including fifty years of close observation and study of affairs, is that the righteous force of commerce, which lives and moves and has its being in mutual service, will ultimately suppress the brutality of war and expose the folly of tariff wars. The four corner stones on which the great structure of this nation is founded are free men, free soil, free speech and free trade over a wider area and among a greater number of people within our own borders than ever enjoyed its benefits before among civilized States. With our expanding commerce, free trade with other nations, qualified only by the necessity of collecting a small customs revenue, will soon come.

If every one of these corner stones is not laid firmly, the whole structure is for the time weakened. The base of all these foundations is common education and common sense, assuring industrial peace. Witness one incident to prove how the engines of warfare may be turned to the support of industry. Not long ago you added a verse to the Scriptures. My old friend, General Wilder, not unknown to you in North Carolina, engaged in thirteen great battles around Chattanooga, in one of which he charged and took a redoubt

that had spread death and destruction around it. In the intervals between the battles he studied the coal and the iron of that section, and as soon as the war ended he returned and established great iron works and on the hill he filled up the embrasures of the redoubt, making it a reservoir. You have heard of the old time, how they should convert their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, but in this instance the deadly site of war and destruction was converted into a fountain of living water to nourish the new industries of the new South.

You may think that my prophecy of industrial peace is but a vision. Who first spoke those words, "peace and goodwill" through long struggle to be attained?

"Peace, aye, to dwell with men,  
No strife, no wars; and then  
The coupled comfort of those golden hours.

Shall these things come to pass?  
Nay, if it be—alas!—  
A vision, let us sleep and dream it true;  
Or, sane and broad awake,  
For its great sound and sake,  
Take it, and make it Earth's, and peace ensue!"

## APPENDIX

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*To the Address of Edward Atkinson, Upon "Sheep on the Cotton Fields."*

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The slight discussion with Mr. B. W. Hunt, of Eatonton, Georgia, after this paper was read, taken in connection with the paper by Mr. Webber on the "Cotton Fibre," makes it suitable to add a few words to what was read.

Mr. Hunt misapprehended the purport of the address, apparently assuming that my suggestion was to put foreign or Northern breeds of sheep and cattle upon Southern cotton fields, he stating what is a well-known fact, that when unacclimated sheep and cattle are moved to the Atlantic States they are subject to specific diseases, most of them dying; but in respect to animals in this case, as in Mr. Webber's history of the cotton plant and the pea-vine, a few escape. My suggestion was not to attempt to continue the foreign or Northern breeds, but to develop a breed, especially of sheep suited to the conditions of every section of every State, immune to the hazards of that particular soil and climate. Mr. Hunt spoke of his import of the fat-tailed sheep of Thibet, which I understood him to say had thriven. Why not cross that breed with an immune sheep of English blood? Why not import the hairy sheep from the calcareous soils of South America and of Asia from which we derive all our coarse carpet wools, and by crossing that breed with fine wool sheep of other blood, perhaps get a special breed of the highest value? It may be observed that the same law appears to govern the hybrids among plants as developed by Mr. Webber, as governs hybrids among animals. Some hybrids become stronger than either of the original types; some weaker. All that is the matter that should be taken up by the Agricultural Experiment Stations in the Cotton

States until every section and every county has been instructed in the right methods of renovating the soil with acclimated or immune herds of sheep.

Again, let me remark that the farmer who now sells cotton seed, as well as cotton fibre, is like Esau selling his patrimony for a mess of pottage. He is exhausting his land and becoming ignorantly dependent upon artificial fertilizers at heavy cost to restore what he has wasted by selling his seed. I have no recent analysis of the cotton fibre or of the cotton seed, but I may go back to my first investigations of the cotton plant, of which the results were printed in "Cheap Cotton by Free Labor," in 1861, when I laid down the whole future of the cotton seed oil industry. Going back to that and to the two analyses of seed therein given, it was proved that the cotton fibre consists almost wholly of carbonaceous material derived from the atmosphere. The oil is also carbonaceous material drawn from the air. The mineral elements derived from the soil are almost all contained in the kernel when freed of oil and in the hulls of the seed. Disregarding fractions, a bale of cotton fibre of five hundred (500) pounds will contain not over five (5) pounds of mineral element drawn from the soil, while the seed from which that fibre has been removed contains nearly fifty (50) pounds, and that fifty pounds is in the kernel and the hull and not in the oil. These mineral elements consist of potash, soda, lime, magnesia, phosphoric acid and a few other minor elements, for all of which high prices are paid for artificial fertilizers, while the cake made from the same field is largely exported to Europe to feed cattle and sheep in foreign lands. Could the force of ignorance any further go?

Lest this view of the matter should not be accepted, coming from a Massachusetts man who never saw a field of cotton until 1866, I venture to give the evidence of Dr. N. B. Cloud, of Alabama, to whose article I referred in my address. In 1850 or thereabout, the Governor of South Carolina consulted Dr. N. B. Cloud, of Alabama, on how to stop the waste of soil in South Carolina. Dr. Cloud's reply was

given in my pamphlet on "Cheap Cotton by Free Labor," from which I now copy :

"Our own sage Franklin, in his friendly advice to Poor Richard, has assured us 'that by constantly taking out of the meal tub and never putting in, we shall soon find the bottom.' Philosophically true, this—good homespun, sound doctrine; yet plain and simple as be this doctrine, the cotton planter knows it only in song—his acquaintance with this golden truth is theoretic only. His exhausted fields, and dwarfish puny cotton, tell tales more positively contradictory and gloomy than I have room or inclination to enumerate.

"You nor I, my very dear sir, may never live to see the day when that *very last man* shall cease to lay his cotton rows up one hill and down another, thus draining off the vitality of his land every three or four feet, to the depth of his puny plough, or to waste the sure means of keeping up the fertility of his fields, by feeding his stock in the public roads.

"The land is first ruined by the one-crop practice of cotton, then turned out to pasture. It soon runs together, produces little grass and sustains poor stock. The difficulty is not so much in the injury, which the hungry stock did in grazing the pasture, as the ruinous system of culture, which prevented any pasture at all. Land under an improving system of culture is not thus affected. Under my system, or any one like it, furnishing the amount and value of pasturage that it does, the raising and keeping of stock, mules, hogs and cattle, necessary to supply the wants of the plantation, becomes a source of absolute profit, the land is made rich and continues improving in the elements of fertility.

"The rich compost manure applied to the land once every four years, in quantities sufficient to make a bale of cotton per acre, continues to improve the land, and thus increase annually the grain crop and pasturage. All this is simple, plain and practical.

"This country is objected to by planters and others taking their cue from them, on account of its 'short bite' and sterile pasturage, as they were pleased to call it. Nor has there

been a designed misrepresentation in this; it is the result of observation derived from the working of this universally draining system of growing cotton. Now the facts which my practice and observation under my system have demonstrated, are these: that no country is equal to this (Alabama) for good and 'long-nip' pasturage. Our climate is remarkably favorable to rich and luxuriant pasturage. The red man of the forest, and the pioneer white man that came here in advance of our *scratching plough*, tell us they found the wild oat and native grasses waving thick, as high as a man's head, and so entwined with the wild pea vine, as to make it difficult to ride among it, all over this country. Every cotton planter has heard of these fine primitive pasture ranges, and many have seen them. *If the country or the climate has been cursed in our appearance as planters here, it has been in the wasting system that we introduced and continue to practice.*

"With a climate and soil peculiarly adapted to production of cotton, our country is also equally favorable to the production of all the necessary cereals, and as remarkably favorable to the perfect development of the animal economy, in fine horses, fine active mules, good milch cows, superior sheep and hogs, and for fruit of every variety (not tropical) it is eminently superior. If this condition of things be fact, and I assert it to be such, why is it that we find so many *wealthy cotton planters*, whose riches consist entirely of their slaves and *worn-out plantations*?

"In every other section of this country, north, east and west, the proceeds of the productive industry of the people in the grand aggregate are retained at home, while we, the planters of the South, producing annually, from a single one of our crops, \$150,000,000, pay out the grand aggregate to others for bread, bacon and mules, all of which we may, under a proper system of plantation economy, grow at home, and thus we may also retain at home this large sum of gold, the substance of our fields, to be expended in home improvements.

"I am entirely convinced, from my own experience in

making manure, that it is not only practicable, but a perfectly easy task to prepare, upon every plantation in the cotton region, great or small, 1,500 bushels of an excellent article of compost, per annum, to the hand, at a cost of less than two cents per bushel, by the assistance of the stock of horses, cows and hogs, upon properly arranged lots.”\*

“It is immaterial what number of hands may work on the place; we allot to each twenty acres, and upon the condition, proceed to divide the land into four equal parts, adopting the system of four years’ shift as best suited to our plantation economy.

“In the next place, I fix the rotation, and shift thus: five acres to each hand in cotton, ten acres for grain, and five acres to lie fallow. I plant cotton on the same land once in four years, always on the fallow land, with a dressing of 500 bushels compost or stock-yard manure to the acre.

“By the 1st of July my cotton stands five to six feet high, and I have it topped by the 10th.

“Strictly follow this plain and simple process, and if the land does not reward your pains-taking, with *five or six fold the quantity per acre*, of a superior staple, than has at any previous year been taken from it, in its natural state, I will present the experimenter with one bushel of my improved seed, with which to perfect the experiment.

“The constant and invariable success which attends this improvement in my hands, is the result of a strict and scrupulous adherence to system in its management.

“Under a system affording such facilities for grain in abundance, rich pasturage for fat home-raised stock of every variety, and land improving annually in fertility, the culture of cotton becomes a *process of gardening*, productive and remunerating.

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\*NOTE.—At the time these letters were written, no method had been discovered for separating the shell from the kernel of the cotton seed, by which, and by pressing out the oil, the seed is made good food for stock. A cheap method has since been perfected.—E. A.



"In other words, after innumerable experiments and tests (from 1844 to 1856) this system has been adopted as the one best and surest, calculated to feed and clothe the operatives of the plantation, supply all the stock necessary to its various uses, improve annually and protect the fertility of the land, and leave at the end of each year, the proceeds of the cotton crop, *as the clear profit of the plantation with all its outfit.*"

On this statement I made the following remarks, in 1861 :

Among other advantages freedom from disease and from insects is promised as the result of Dr. Cloud's system.

The great adaptation of a product requiring such culture consisting of small allotments rather than large plantations, will be evident as well as the absolute necessity of intelligent labor to bring such a system of cultivation into general use.

I have been waiting from 1861 to 1903 to witness the application of intelligent labor on small allotments, to the doubling of the cotton crop without increasing the area of land, and to the renovation of the soil which has only been skinned. I am now much nearer eighty than seventy. How much longer will it take before the prophecies which I have made of the future progress of the Southland in intensive, productive and profitable farming, by which cotton may become the surplus or profit crop, will be justified?

Respectfully submitted,

EDWARD ATKINSON.

Boston, May 21st, 1903.

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